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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 443rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 8 July 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. de SILVA (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared open the 1996 session of the Ad Hoc Committee.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of members of the Ad Hoc Committee to the agenda for the session (A/AC.159/L.124) and said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt it.

3. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, owing to the departure of Mr. Afonso (Mozambique), the Government of Mozambique had nominated Mr. dos Santos to the office of Vice-Chairman. He took it that the Committee wished to elect him to that post.

5. Mr. dos Santos (Mozambique) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that, owing to the departure of Mr. Jusuf (Indonesia), the Government of Indonesia had nominated Mr. Parnohadiningrat to the office of Vice-Chairman. He took it that the Committee wished to elect him to that post.

7. Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/76 OF 12 DECEMBER 1995

Briefing by the Chairman on his consultations

8. The CHAIRMAN said that the 1996 session of the Ad Hoc Committee was confined to one meeting. In its resolution 50/76, the General Assembly requested the Chairman to pursue his dialogue on the work of the Committee with the permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean and to apprise the Ad Hoc Committee of his consultations and other relevant developments.

9. He had consulted the three permanent members of the Security Council that had withdrawn from the Committee: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and France. During his consultations, he had referred, in particular, to the new climate of confidence that had emerged following the end of the cold war and the reduction of tensions resulting from the termination of super-Power rivalry. He had stressed that that new situation presented opportunities for new, alternative approaches to regional and global cooperation in the Indian Ocean. He had informed them that the Ad Hoc Committee had reiterated its view that, as permanent members of the Security Council, their renewed participation in the work of the Committee was important. He had emphasized that their participation would greatly facilitate

the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

10. The United States of America had informed him that, from the beginning, the United States had not agreed with the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, although it had attended meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee until 1989. As a major Power, the United States needed unhindered movement in the oceans of the world to look after its strategic interests. The United States had also stated that the points made in the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace were currently irrelevant. In its view, the concerns of the Indian Ocean countries should be addressed by those countries themselves on a regional basis without involving outside Powers, as had been done when the South Atlantic had been made a zone of peace. The United States had further stated that the Indian Ocean countries themselves had many different views on security, disarmament, and so forth, that would have to be reconciled if the proposed zone of peace in the Indian Ocean was to become a viable mechanism. Moreover, it had been pointed out that the annual expenditure of US$ 150,000 to maintain the Ad Hoc Committee could not be justified at a time when the regular budget of the United Nations should be used for more pressing tasks, such as the needs of refugees and humanitarian concerns.

11. The United Kingdom had informed him that it had voted against General Assembly resolution 50/76 and that the reports it had received on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee's 1995 session did not give it any reason to believe that the Committee was making significant progress. The United Kingdom therefore remained convinced that there was currently no reason to change its position on rejoining the Committee.

12. France had confirmed its position as conveyed to him in 1995. France's eventual return to the Ad Hoc Committee was contingent upon the deletion of references to the 1971 Declaration from the General Assembly resolution defining the Committee's mandate. France had also drawn attention to the fact that it had signed three additional Protocols to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) of 1995. That was an important contribution to peace and security in the western part of the Indian Ocean region.

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly

13. The CHAIRMAN said that, by the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, he intended to hold the broadest possible consultations and to keep the members of the Committee informed of their outcome. He therefore suggested that the following paragraph should be included in the report of the Committee:

> "The Committee decided that the Chairman should consult with the members of the Ad Hoc Committee concerning a draft resolution for submission to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session."

14. Mr. dos SANTOS (Mozambique) expressed concern that three permanent members of the Security Council were not participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, especially in the light of the imposition of financial constraints, which posed a threat to the Committee's existence. His delegation was in favour

of the continuation of the Committee's work and participation in it by those States, which it considered to be staunch advocates of international peace and security.

15. His delegation supported the Chairman's recommendations to the General Assembly.

16. Mr. HANIF (Pakistan) said that it would be useful to know the manner in which the informal consultations would be held, how the Committee would be notified of their outcome and when the draft resolution would be issued.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that he had in mind highly informal consultations the purpose of which would be to clarify the views of members of the Committee, acquaint other members with those views and, in turn, clarify their reactions to them. He would seek a broad consensus on the content of a draft resolution, and interested groups would then be invited to consider the draft resolution, which could be submitted to the General Assembly.

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

18. Ms. LINGAYA (Madagascar), Rapporteur, read out the draft report to be issued as document A/51/29 following its adoption by the Committee.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to consider and adopt the draft report.

20. Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegations that had made statements at the current meeting would be mentioned in paragraph 3, which listed the participants in the general discussion under agenda item 4.

22. Paragraphs 3 to 7 were adopted.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that the report that he had presented earlier on his consultations with the permanent members of the Security Council would be included in paragraph 8.

24. Paragraphs 8 to 10 were adopted.

25. Mr. HANIF (Pakistan) said that, as the agreement by the Committee to hold its regular session in 1997 had been mentioned in paragraph 20 of the previous year's report (A/50/29), reference to that agreement should also be made in the report under consideration.

26. Mr. AKBARUDDIN (India) noted that paragraph 1 of the draft report already contained a reference to the holding of the Committee's regular session in 1997.

27. Mr. HANIF (Pakistan) said that paragraph 1 merely recalled General Assembly resolution 50/76. Plans for the holding of the Committee's regular session in

1997 should again take the form of a recommendation, which would be included both in the report and in the future draft resolution.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that the appropriate wording would be included in the report.

29. The draft report, as a whole, was adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.